

Improving Access for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind Arkansans 2022 Proposal

Background of the Problem

Historically, Arkansas has been a service model for deaf and hard of hearing adults, providing staff fluent in American Sign Language, knowledgeable regarding access barriers faced by these communities, and adept at implementing solutions needed to improve accessibility and mitigate barriers regarding employment, postsecondary environments, and other services necessary to navigate in a hearing world. Over time, however, these services have been either dismantled or subsumed into general components of their original parent agencies, devastating Arkansans who are deaf and hard of hearing and leaving a virtual vacuum of services. As such, there is now no state-wide comprehensive initiative which advances the civil rights of, and addresses the spectrum of needs within, the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind communities of Arkansas.

Vision & Goals

While a service vacuum exists, recent legislative efforts to improve services for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind Arkansans signals state willingness to continue strengthening support for its valued citizens. By rethinking and revising existing program workflows, generating new supports to supplement available services, and avoiding duplication, a potential solution emerges which responds to the needs of the communities, responds realistically to geographic and cultural realities of Arkansas, and results from collaboration between various service providers. This effort is, was, and will be driven by the philosophy of community-directed leadership in order to foster inclusion of anyone who experiences barriers and discrimination as a result of being Deaf, DeafBlind or Hard of Hearing.

Priority Needs

Advocacy

- Conduct systems-level advocacy for access, inclusion, and barrier removal for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind individuals according to applicable federal disability rights legislation; conduct individual-level advocacy as needed through ensuring and providing equal and effective communication access.

Education & Outreach

- Provide education/outreach to organizations/businesses to improve service delivery to Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind Arkansans, and provide education and outreach to these communities to increase knowledge of legal rights, available technologies, resources, and opportunities to increase quality of life.

Coordination

- Create an entity to bring stakeholders together, maximize service provider communication, and reduce service redundancy while improving braided workflows.

Proposed Budget

We propose a phased in funding structure that will allow for proof of concept and data collection in years 1 and 2, with a follow-up proposal based on the numbers of those accessing the services and additional needs identified during year 1. The budget below is proposed for the first two years. Initially, we propose a staff of 4 full-time individuals who will lead the efforts to bring stakeholders together and provide services related to advocacy, coordination, education and outreach.

Personnel

Director: 100% FTE @ \$90,000 + 25,200 (28% fringe) = \$115,200

- Oversee operations and provide leadership for staff
- Provide leadership within the state on issues impacting Deaf, Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind Arkansans and create plan for future direction of agency

Interpreter/Access Specialist: 100% FTE @ \$60,000 + \$16,800 = \$76,800

- Interpret for agency-specific events and needs
- Coordinate access providers
- Assist other agencies in understanding access-related needs and services

Deaf Outreach Specialist: 100% FTE @ \$60,000 + \$16,800 = \$76,800

- Provide training to state agencies, service providers, and the general public on providing access to Deaf, Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind Arkansans
- Provide training to Deaf, Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind Arkansans

Administrative Assistant/Budget Specialist: 100% FTE @ \$45,000 + 12,600 (28% fringe) = 57,600

- Assist agency staff in conducting day to day business of the organization
- Manage budget and other operations

Hard of Hearing Outreach Specialist: 100% FTE @ \$60,000 + 16,800 = \$76,800

- Provide training to state agencies, service providers, and the general public on providing access to Deaf, Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind Arkansans
- Provide training to Deaf, Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind Arkansans

Total personnel: \$403,200.00

Professional Services

Consultation Services: 28 days onsite and distance consultation @ \$1500/day = \$42,000

- Contract with a consultant to conduct needs assessment and strategic planning with community stakeholders and make recommendations

Interpreting and Captioning Services: \$75/hour for 800 hours = \$60,000

- Ensure all meetings are accessible to advisors and stakeholders.

Contract with IT professional: \$75/hour for 1,000 hours = \$75,000

Legal Services: 75 hours @ \$250/hour = \$18,750

Total: \$195,750

Supplies

5 computers with software and peripherals (Printer/scanner, backup drive for each): \$3500 each = \$17,500

1 LCD Projector, screen and replacement bulbs = \$1,250

Paper, pens, printer cartridges and other general office supplies: \$2,500

Mountable monitor for presentations = \$3,000

10 Videophones for deaf community use located with strategic partners around the state = \$1,500

Assistive listening devices for Hard of Hearing- 2 Demonstration and loaners @ \$1,500 = \$3,000

UbiDuo Communication Device for Deaf and Hard of Hearing- 4 Demonstration and loaners @ \$3,995 = \$15,980

1 Computer lab with office desk, computer, and printer for the community use such as employment search = \$3,000

Office Furniture: \$25,000

Total: \$72,730

Travel Expenses for Training and Advocacy:

Estimate for Staff participation in one national conference training event. Necessary to be on current issues, strategies, legislation, and other topics related to Deaf, Hard-of-earring, and DeafBlind.

2 staff to National Association of the Deaf Conference @ \$3,000 = \$6,000 for registration, lodging, per diem for meals, and travel.

2 staff to National ADA Symposium Conference @ 3,000 = \$6,000 for registration, lodging, per diem for meals, and travel.

1 staff to National Hands and Voices Conference = \$2,500 for registration, lodging, per diem for meals, and travel.

1 staff to National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf Conference = \$2,500 for registration, lodging, per diem for meals, and travel.

1 staff to the Hearing Loss Association of America Conference = \$2,500 for registration, lodging,

Total: \$19,500

Facility

1800 Square Foot Space @ \$33/square foot = \$59,400

Total annual budget: \$750,580